

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2004

The Honorable Andrew Natsios
Administrator, Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Administrator Natsios:

The U.S. Agency for International Development is providing assistance to the upcoming XV International AIDS Conference to be held July 11- 16 in Bangkok, Thailand. While conferences can provide an important venue for researchers to exchange ideas and present scientific data, we were troubled by aspects of the last International AIDS Conference held in 2002 in Barcelona, and hope that through your continued involvement the world will see a more balanced conference in Bangkok.

We were disappointed when we learned, for instance, that no health representative from the Catholic Church was invited to address the 2002 Barcelona conference, despite the fact that this Church cares for one in four people worldwide receiving treatment for HIV. In addition, none of the major speeches or lectures in 2002 addressed the faith community's role in the AIDS crisis. As you know, in many parts of the world, particularly Africa, it is often local churches and religious communities who care for orphans and those living with HIV/AIDS. As you have stated many times yourself, faith-based groups serve an essential role in the global response to HIV.

In Barcelona, little attention was paid to one of the few success stories in the battle against HIV/AIDS: the dramatic reduction of HIV rates in Uganda. Uganda's "ABC" prevention model contains clear, targeted, and prioritized messages that emphasize abstinence and being faithful as the first lines of defense against HIV. Uganda's ABC approach as been credited with a dramatic decline in HIV prevalence, from 15 to 5 percent, between 1991 and 2001, and it is this success that led President Bush and Congress to follow the Ugandan model when crafting the new Global HIV/AIDS initiative. Administrator Natsios, it is crucial that any international AIDS conference receiving U.S. taxpayer support feature an honest and open discussion about the science behind and the success of Uganda's ABC program.

We are interested in learning more about the upcoming conference and others supported by USAID. To this end, please provide us with the following information:

- (1) How many attendees, including federal employees, will receive USAID funds to attend to the XV International AIDS Conference?
(please provide names and titles)

- (2) How many of those being financially supported by USAID to attend the XV International AIDS Conference are from faith-based groups?
- (3) What percentage of the scientific abstracts to be presented by USAID staff at the XV International AIDS Conference specifically address ABC in Uganda, abstinence, monogamy and partner reduction? Please provide a list of the accepted abstracts that address any of these topics.
- (4) Including the XV International AIDS Conference, how many conferences related to HIV/AIDS will USAID provide both direct financial support and in-kind donations to during the 2004 calendar year? Please list each conference by subject, location, and date. Please also provide an itemized total on the amount of assistance, both direct financial support and in-kind donations, that will be spent on each.
- (5) What is the total amount USAID will spend on all conferences, including staff time, travel, and support, during fiscal year 2004 or the most recent fiscal year?

Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Pitts

W. Tash Alvin

Barbara Allen

Steve King

Dave Galdon
Jim Butkewitz

Virgil Goody

Mark Sander